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Mr. BALLY's POEM
ON THE
W I S D O M
OF THE
SUPREME BEING.

(Price One Shilling)

WILLIAM

OF THE

MR. BARRY'S POETRY

OF THE

WILLIAM

OF THE

SUPREMACY

(The Old Song)

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THE
WISDOM
OF THE
SUPREME BEING.
A
POEM.

K By GEORGE BALLY, M.A.
Fellow of *King's* College.

CAMBRIDGE,
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BY GEORGE BALLY, M.A.



RECEIVED

A Clause of Mr. SEATON's Will,

Dated Oct. 8. 1738.

I Give my Kislingbury Estate to the University of Cambridge for ever: the Rents of which shall be disposed of yearly by the Vice-Chancellor for the time being, as he the Vice-Chancellor, the Master of Clare-Hall, and the Greek Professor for the time being, or any two of them shall agree. Which three persons aforesaid shall give out a Subject, which Subject shall for the first Year be one or other of the Perfections or Attributes of the Supreme Being, and so the succeeding Years, till the Subject is exhausted; and afterwards the Subject shall be either Death, Judgment, Heaven, Hell, Purity of heart, &c. or whatever else may be judged by the Vice-Chancellor, Master of Clare-Hall, and Greek Professor to be most conducive to the honour of the Supreme Being and recommendation of Virtue. And they shall yearly dispose of the Rent of the above Estate to that Master of Arts, whose Poem on the Subject given shall be best approved by them. Which Poem I ordain to be always in English, and to be printed; the expence of which shall be deducted out of the product of the Estate, and the residue given as a reward for the Composer of the Poem, or Ode, or Copy of Verses.

WE the underwritten, do assign Mr. SEATON's Reward to Mr. BALLY, M.A. for his Poem on *The Wisdom of the Supreme Being*, and direct the said Poem to be printed, according to the tenor of the Will.

Sept. 25, 1756.

Edm. Law Vice-Chancellor.

J. Wilcox Master of Clare Hall.

THE
WISDOM
OF THE
SUPREME BEING.

ONCE more the Muse, with pious ardor rapt,
Spurns the dank Earth, and trembling soars aloft
To hymn her God, JEHOVAH Only-Wife.

O for a beam from th' uncreated Fount
Of Light to pierce the gloom, that hov'ring damps
The brisk ethereal Particle, which longs
Unmanacled and free to trace the steps
Of Wisdom, and at distance to adore!

O Thou, who from the stamm'ring lips of babes

Mak'st

Mak'st heav'nly Truths distill to shame the pride,
The letter'd pride of reas'ning erring Man;
Who, when the full Maturity of Time,
From endless ages preordain'd, arriv'd,
Did'st from the dregs of Ignorance elect
Promulgers of Thy Knowledge, O vouchsafe
Thy gracious aid to these my labour'd strains,
Which fain would swell the choral symphony
Of Angels and Archangels evermore
Glowing with love intense, and warbling sweet
Their songs of joy with praises intermixt!
O let Thy Impulse guide Me, whilst I range
Nature's wide field of Wonders, where imprest
On ev'ry atom shines creative Skill,
And ev'ry humble Shrub proclaims a God!
Without Thy Influence spiritless would flow
These Numbers, as a tinkling cymbal's sound:
And much, I ween, would Folly's babling tongue
Profane that Wisdom, she presum'd to sing.

Shall

THE SUPREME BEING.

7

Shall boastful Reason, the minutest ray
Beam'd from the self-existent Sire of Lights,
Disdain subjection, and refuse to bring
Her incense to the throne of God? instead
Of Admiration, which His Works exact,
Works where transcendent Art displays her pow'rs,
Shall she, with impious triumph flush'd, retort
Her wanton censure, infidel reproof?
Say, Sceptic, can thine eye pervade the whole,
See System on dependent System verge,
And Causes with Effects connected all
In one unbroken chain? Did Science ever
Lend Thee a Seraph's flamy wing to mount
Above th' empyreal Sphere? There didst Thou view
The golden Balance which the Mountains weigh'd,
Ere their aspiring foreheads pierc'd the clouds?

Proud philosophic fool! thy airy flight
Suspend awhile, and drop into Thyself:
Attentive scan the texture of thy Frame

How

How fearfully contriv'd! the visual orbs
Remark, how aptly station'd for their task;
Rais'd to th' imperial Head's high citadel
A wide extended prospect to command.
See the arch'd outworks of impending Lids
With hairs, as palisadoes, fenc'd around
To ward annoyance from without. The Nose
Its intervening wall projects, the Cheeks
Swell with a gentle eminence, to shield
The body's gay irradiating Beam.
Who taught the rays, refracted from the bright
Chrystalline Convex, in a central point
To join their confluent streams, and paint each form
Of dedal Nature in the fund opake,
Ill copied by Apelles' happiest skill?
Who but th' Omniscient Architect! who bade
The universal Eye, th' illustrious Sun,
From Chaos' darksome womb his splendors dart
T' enlighten and refresh the new-born World.

The

THE SUPREME BEING.

9

The channel'd Ear with many a winding maze
How artfully perplext, to catch the sound,
And from her repercussive caves augment!

When the crude shapeless Mass imprison'd lay
In its maternal cell, what plastic pow'r
Appropriate figure to each part assign'd,
And gave th' envelop'd Animal t' expand?
Whose Nod controll'd the work abstruse, infus'd
All-quick'ning vigour, and each motion sway'd?
Who in the dark the vital flame illum'd,
And from th' impulsive engine caus'd to flow
Th' ejaculated streams thro' many a pipe
Arterial with meandring lapse, then bring
Refluent their purple tribute to their Fount?
Who spun the finews' branchy thread, and twin'd
The azure veins in spiral knots to waft
Life's tepid waves all o'er, or Who with bones
Compacted, and with nerves the Fabric strung?
Their specious form, their fitness, which results

* B

From

From figure and arrangement, all declare
Th' Artificer divine. — 'Twas Thou, O Lord,
Who in the deep recess did'st mould the clay
Obsequious to thy will; the process dark
Thou saw'st, and Nought escap'd thy piercing Eye.
Ere yet I was, in thy eternal Rolls
Each bone was written, and each fibrous chord,
All-perfect Models of my future Frame.

And yet shall Man, who bears a World inclos'd
Of Wonders in Himself, tho' on his mind
Conviction flashes like a flood of Day,
In voluntary gloom benighted sit?
With intellectual faculties endow'd,
Stamp'd on thy soul Thy Maker's signature,
In this magnific sky-roof'd Temple plac'd
High-Priest of Nature, to return to Heav'n
Due Incense, and articulate the praise
Of thy mute vassals, dar'st Thou, Wretch ingrate,
The Gift accept, the Giver leave unthank'd?

See

THE SUPREME BEING.

II

See feeble instinct with unvaried aim
Guide thy brute subjects to their Being's end,
Reproach to Reason's over-weening pride!
Their task enjoin'd they chearfully perform,
And laud the best they can their bounteous God.
With deep-ton'd praises roars the Wilderness,
The Groves with Melody resound; All Nature
Upbraids the thankless silence of her Lord,
Rebel to Him, whose delegate he reigns.

How fightless soars Philosophy, whene'er
She quits the beaten track that Nature points,
And Reason, yet with prejudice unting'd;
When impious she assumes creative pow'r,
And builds a World without an Architect!
In vain does Epicurus, borne aloft
Beyond the flaming barriers of our sphere
Into th' illimitable Void, command
His marshal'd atoms, and direct their flight.
Whatever course he gives them, straight, oblique,

They never could, tho' ages they had sped
Their swift career, have met in Space immense,
And each concurring with his like coher'd.

Illusive Dreams, and ravings of a Brain
Unpurg'd with Ellebore! to think that small
Unguided particles, at random floating
Thro' shoreless seas of Emptiness diffus'd,
Could haply clash, and slide into an Orb!
Say, Grecian Dotard, did thy idol Chance,
Of Worlds expert Artificer, e'er bid
A sudden palace deck the wond'ring waste;
Did stones and timber, trooping to her call,
Leap to a finish'd pile, and stand self-rang'd?

When first thy atoms with a ceaseless show'r
Rush'd from th' Expanse tumultuous, say what Mounds,
Rais'd in the thin vacuity t' arrest
Their progress, check'd them in midway, and made
Them settle to a Mass? could they unknowing
Determine where to fix, and there in spite

Of

Of Gravity's accelerating force,
Lull'd in the Air's soft ambient bosom rest?
What counteracted Nature's gen'ral laws,
And gave th' inflected bias? did they call
A Council ere they fally'd from the goal,
And for each troop a rendezvous appoint?
Here Reason fails. You, and your wise reply
Amounts to nothing more than so it chanc'd
That this our Planet with th' unnumber'd Orbs,
Which perfect the stupendous artful Whole,
After repeated conflicts, and a war
Of thwarting particles, their strife compos'd,
Did ruffled into Harmony subside.

That philosophic tow'r, from whence You boast
To look all Nature thro', and pity Man
Bewilder'd in the mazy vale below,
Shook with each flight interrogation nods:
And, when the storm of Argument assaults,
The treach'rous basis sinks, and down it falls.

Du-

Duration's bounds Stagira's bolder Sage
O'erleaps, and leff'ning to the view a World
Amidst Eternity's vast trackless wilds
Explores. But what success, what glorious meed
Rewards th' adventure? merits He for this
The Realms of Science with despotic sway
To govern, and his tyranny usurp'd
Deep in our vassal intellects to found?
Let this high-vaulting Genius from his flight
Transcendent stoop, and to enquiring sense
A sober answer give, why, if for ever
Things in the same unvaried tenor flow'd,
If Battles from eternity were fought,
And Politics in endless series plann'd,
No direful tumults swell'd th' Aonian Trump
Before the war of Thebes, or siege of Troy:
Why from no higher spring historic Truth
Rolls down thro' ages her memorial stores:
Why Arts flow-rip'ning in the womb of Time

So

So late attain'd their growth; why from the East
But yesterday her orient beam display'd
Emerging Science, and with Heav'n's bright Lamp
In radiant progress journey'd to the West.
Did one eternal torpor chill the brain
Of infinite Successions? unalert
Was Nature, nor yet strong enough to form
An Aristotle's all-pervading Mind?

In vain your routed clan of Vot'ries fly
To Deluges. For where embosom'd sleeps
Sufficient mass of Moisture to dissolve
The Globe, and from its faded face to blot
Each faithful Monument? if this exceeds
Nature's weak pow'rs, they'll cease to rouse at will
The Waters from their bed, left unawares
They conjure up an Agent they disclaim.
If Nature can atchieve the feat, Ye Wits
Illumin'd, say, why in a round immense
Of unbeginning Years it always chanc'd

That

That indiscriminating Floods should spare
A chosen Few, to stock the desert World:
Why, when the Deep its riven jaws disclos'd,
And Desolation o'er the prostrate Ball
Wide-wasting swept along, not All Mankind
Once in the oft repeated Wrecks was lost,
And Your Eternal Race expung'd for ever.

If Particles obnoxious to decay
The universal Frame compose, amidst
The ceaseless ravage of unmeasur'd Years
Earth on her Axis had no longer mov'd
Vertiginous, long since a mould'ring heap
Of Dust: the Sun, so prodigal of light,
His golden urn exhausted whence the Stars
Imbibe their gleam, had spent his latest ray,
And scatter'd in loose atoms roam'd the Void.

Thus with Sisyphian toil misguided Wit
The stone reluctant up the steep high Cliff
Urges: with violent recoil the Mass

Rushes

Rushes precipitous, and mocks their pains.
 Tho' Mountain pil'd on Mountain threat'ning stands,
 Confusion follows, and their Babel drops.
 Philosophy's but Folly in disguise,
 A glitt'ring Ignorance, a fev'rish Dream,
 Unless from Earth, the Footstool of her God,
 She leads like Jacob's Ladder to His Throne.

To trace the Wisdom of th' all-knowing Mind
 In the World's ample Volume to our view
 In shining characters display'd, to glow,
 Like Seraphs, as we turn th' amazing page,
 And magnify the glorious Author's name,
 This This is to be Wise beyond the School
 Of Epicurus, or Lyceum fam'd.

What human tongue can worthily record
 The treasures of Eternal Intellect,
 The Fair archetypal, whence beams deriv'd
 Each Good delectable, each beauteous Form,
 That Nature's spacious Theatre adorns?

How shall sublim'd Imagination dart
Into th' unlimited circumfluous deep
Of Chaos drear and dark, there see Heav'n's King
Borne on Cherubic Wings enounce the Word
Omnific? Wild Uproar hears, and is still,
And Circumscription checks Infinity!

How all-accomplish'd Sapience blaz'd abroad
Conspicuous in each grand proportion'd Work,
When the Divine Geometrician stretch'd
Th' immeasurable level thro' the Void,
And to the canton'd System bounds ordain'd!
What Hand could scoop the Sea's capacious bed,
But His, who grasp'd the Waters in his palm?
Who could expand the Curtains of the Sky,
And tinge with blush of Day their gorgeous Skirts,
But the ineffable I AM, who reigns
In splendor unapproachable enshrin'd?
What placid smiles of sweet complacency
In the Creator's radiant aspect shone,

When

When He survey'd his Workmanship, and saw
Utility and Grace diffus'd throughout!
With admiration rapt of heav'nly Skill
The Sons of Phosphor hail'd the dawning World
With shouts triumphant; ev'ry harp was tun'd
Angelic to His praise, who Order call'd
From Tumult, and from Nothing All educ'd.

Where'er We turn our eyes, above, below,
The Deity confronts Us, and reveal'd
Flames in each Bush, and sparkles in each Star.
Where could the Platform of this complex Frame,
But in th' Eternal Mind's abyfs, exist?
What but a Wise Omnipotence the Plan
Illustrious could so splendidly complete?

The Sun, when with a vig'rous Bridegroom's heat
He sallies from the chambers of the East,
His Maker in his silent course proclaims.
Look up, vain Sceptic, and derive a ray
Thence to thy darken'd Soul; yon glorious Orb

Perpend, the Persian's Mithras, who ascrib'd
Th' emaning Good, by Providence devis'd
Omniscient, to th' unconscious Instrument,
Absorpt his Senses in the dazling Beam.
Thou more sagacious hence infer a God,
Who launch'd in Air the Planet, and prescrib'd
An Orbit to His Ends benign most fit.
See! at due distance from Our Globe dispos'd
With warmth attemper'd to her Womb he cheers
Th' all-fruitful Mother, and each Birth matures.
Had he, where sluggish Saturn rolls, been plac'd,
What desolation had deform'd this scene
Now so profuse of ev'ry boon! undeck'd
With mantling Grass her lap, despoil'd her meads
Of laughing harvests, Earth had stood untrod
By Man or Beast, an icy Wilderness.
If nearer he had wheel'd his flamy car,
His torrid rays had cleft the solid Rocks,
Exhal'd the Lakes, and drain'd the briny Deep.

The

The molten surface had to ashes turn'd,
Or whirl'd in eddying sands obscur'd the Sky.

See! how declining from the way direct
He winds obliquely thro' th' Ecliptic road
His course unwearied. Hence the Seasons rise,
And glad with sweet vicissitude the Year.

Could Chance atchieve these Wonders, and impress
Such constant movements that, since Time began
His measur'd race, not once the Sire of day
Should start forgetful from the track, and bring
Chill Winter into Summer's flow'ry reign?

Or where such Counsel, such Design are seen,
Must We not call an All-directing Mind
To solve th' amazing Knot? th' Opificer
All-pow'rful and All-wise alone could frame
For Uses multiform an Orb, without
Whose vital beams All Nature would expire,
And Darkness be the Burier of the Dead.

He the projected Motion gave: His Arm,

Un-

Un-

Unshorten'd still, restricts the rapid whirl
Of Planets to their Centre, and with Chains
Of Gravity and firm Cohesion binds
Each struggling atom, which would else unhing'd
Fly off, and ruin scatter thro' the Void.

Who sees a Sphere, where mimic Wit displays
The site, the number, and the size of All
Yon rolling Worlds, and how in figur'd dance
They glide harmonious, at first glance assents
That Reason sway'd the cunning Artist's hand.
Yet when he sees the wondrous Archetype,
The Heav'ns themselves, with swift rotation urg'd,
Invariably each grateful Change revolve
Conducive to the Welfare of the Whole,
Doubts he that this by Reason is perform'd,
By Reason all-surpassing and Divine?

Tho' Man were silent, th' azure Firmament,
The Moon, and all the glittering Host of Stars,
Fix'd and erratic, would with one accord

Blazon

Blazon Almighty Wisdom, and declare
The Marvels of His Finger, who, for ends
Subservient to His Glory and Our Good,
Bade their gay Splendors gild the brow of Night.

If to this lower Planet we advert,
Seat of Our Birth and Nurture, proofs abound
Of infinite Contrivance, matchless Skill.
Whether the site or figure we regard,
Or distribution of the various parts
Perfective of the System, Strokes appear
Too exquisite for bungling Chance to hit
With erring implements. A Mind alone,
Where Models of Perfection treasur'd lay
From All Eternity, could call the fair
Exemplar into being when it will'd.

A form orbicular how fit to weigh
The golden gift of Light and Heat to all
The scatter'd districts with impartial scale!
Hence too the Waters, those meandering veins

O'er

O'er the Earth's body interspers'd, with just
Partition flow salubrious. To the Winds,
Balmy refiners of the winnow'd Air,
This most commodious Figure yields a pass
Free, unobstructed. Had another shape
Been giv'n, impeding Angles had oppos'd
The breezy Currents, and Mankind had droop'd
Sickly and faint from th' intercepted Gale.

What made the humid Particles recede
From the dry land, and wear a furrow'd bed
Capacious of their streams? Could aught but Art
The blended Mass so skilfully disjoin?
Thou Thou alone, with whom enthron'd on high
Sits coessential Wisdom, bad'st subside
The Vallies, and the Mountains from amidst
Th' o'erwhelming moisture heave their brow sublime.
The liquid troops, obedient to Thy Voice,
Fled to th' appointed station. Thou a bound
Hast set they cannot pass; nor ever spread

Their

Their flowing Mantle o'er th' invested Earth :
Thou to the Sea say'st, hitherto advance,
And here thy proud licentious waves be stay'd.
In various ducts, as Thou ordain'st, disperst
The Globe-encircling Waters draw their train,
And health and vigour as they glide impart.

Yet here rash Man Thy Counsels dares implead,
And blames the vast diffusion of the Deep
As useless and deform. He thinks that thrift
In dealing out the Treasures of th' Abyss,
And a more lib'ral dole of needful Land,
Had spoke a wise Dispenser of his stores.
Vainly he cries, "Half th' Ocean might be spar'd,
Superfluous Waste! and added to domains
Too strait for Man, who, by continual wars
T' inlarge his frontier, seems to breathe but ill,
As in a Prison's narrow limits pent."

Blush, futil Caviller, who Nature's Lord
Arraign'st, unread in Nature's mystic lore.

For know that Vapours on their dusky wings
In due proportion to the Surface rise
Sublim'd. Had then thy frugal scheme prevail'd,
And the shrunk Ocean flow'd with lessen'd wave,
Instead of plenteous streams which now refresh
Earth's saturated womb, but few had roll'd
Their scanty fluid o'er the thirsty glebe:
Eve had not shed profuse her trickling balm,
Nor Clouds dropt fatness on the labour'd field.

Thus in the nat'ral as the moral World
The strictest scrutiny but serves t' unveil
New Riches in the deep exhaustless Mine
Of heav'nly Wisdom: What is Best, the stamp
Of Deity, occurs in ev'ry work.
His Providence the floating vast Machine
Steers with unerring hand. Hence 'midst the flight
Of Ages ne'er one jarring atom broke
The nice adjustment of conspiring parts,
Or clogg'd the motion of the smallest wheel,

Scep-

Sceptic, no more the dazzling beams withstand,
Bright emanations of a sapient God,
But, taught by Nature, Nature's Lord adore:
From known Effects of Order and Design
Rise to the self-existent Cause Supreme:
The Depths of Wisdom, far as human Ken
Can penetrate, explore, and here attain
A foretaste of that Knowledge, which perhaps,
With Angels poring o'er the Text abstruse,
And in ecstatic admiration lost,
Will in Eternity's unceasing round
The intuition of thy Soul absorb.

F I N I S.

THE SUPREME BEING

Scripture no more the equally beams with him

Bright emanation of a Father's God

But taught by Nature's Name's Lord alone

From known Effects of Order and Design

Wise to the full extent of Cause and Effect

The Depths of Wisdom far as Reason goes

Can penetrate, explore, and comprehend

A fourth of that which is beyond

With Angels' powers of the most sublime

And in celestial vision lost

Full in Infinity's unending round

The question of the Soul is found



